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ABSTRACT

This theme issue includes six articles about nurturing parent and community involvement in schools, particularly schools serving Hispanic, immigrant, or economically disadvantaged students. "Thinking about Learning: The Community and Academic Standards" (Oanh H. Maroney, Aurelio M. Montemayor) describes a Corpus Christi (Texas) project in which workshops for parents of middle-school students increased parent awareness of academic standards and their implications and fostered parent empowerment and leadership. "Two Innovative El Paso Schools Bring Together Teachers and the Community" (Pam McCollum) describes a community event in which parents and teachers walked through El Paso (Texas) neighborhoods and shared a lunch, thereby increasing teacher-community interaction and teacher awareness of their students' background. "School Improvement, Parent Involvement and Prevention" (Dorothy L. Knight, Joseph L. Vigil) discusses strategies to involve parents and communities in school improvement initiatives, particularly violence and drug abuse prevention programs. "What It Means To Be 'Una Persona Educada'" (Carmen Prieto Cortez) discusses the devastating effects of poverty on Hispanic student outcomes and how such effects are prevented by traditional Hispanic cultural values: dignity, respect, trust, and love. "The Nurturing of Parent Leadership" (Aurelio M. Montemayor) describes the development of a Texas network of limited-English-proficient or economically disadvantaged parents through a four-stage model involving parents as teachers, resources, decision makers, and peer trainers. "Parents Speak Out: Quality Education for All Children" includes an excerpt of parent interviews about the education of immigrant children and bilingual education. Includes addresses of 29 World Wide Web sites for parent, family, and community involvement. (SV)

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

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Parent, Family and Community Involvement

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Thinking about Learning: The Community and Academic Standards

Oanh H. Maraney and Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

Inside this Issue:

◇ A walk through the community

◇ A model for parent leadership

◇ School opening alert

◇ A tribute to Carmen Prieto Cortez

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Educating our children requires active involvement from all members of the community. The sole responsibility does not lie with teachers or schools. Since its beginning, IDRA has worked with parents, teachers, counselors and community-based organizations to improve education for all children. For the past several months, IDRA has been engaged in a project called *Community Leadership for Standards-Based Reform* through a grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. The project facilitates increased accountability on the part of educators, parents and community organizations for the education of children in the Corpus Christi Independent School District (ISD).

The school district is implementing new academic standards in its middle schools. However, the community at-large is unaware of the implications this change has brought to secondary education. IDRA is working with local organizations to inform parents of middle school children about the new academic standards and how they affect students' grades and performance requirements. Once parents have acquired a clear understanding of the issues that affect their children, they are better able to act as strong advocates of those issues.

Two distinct components compose the project. The first component focuses on teachers, administrators and parent outreach facilitators in the Corpus Christi ISD. IDRA staff members met with these individuals at least once a month throughout the 1996-1997 school year for school-community planning sessions. While there are participants from several middle school campuses throughout the district, the project specifically targets five middle school campuses: Cunningham Middle School, Driscoll Middle School, Martin Middle School and South Park Middle School, and the Wynn Seale Academy of Fine Arts.

The second component focuses on parents and community-based organizations. IDRA, through the grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, has awarded mini-grants to community-based organizations that serve families in the five target schools' attendance zones. Each community-based organization uses these funds to conduct outreach activities to families in the community. For example, community-based organizations recruit parents to attend workshops conducted by IDRA staff members. The purpose of these workshops is twofold. First, the workshops provide a forum through which parents learn more about the new academic standards that have been implemented in Corpus Christi middle schools. Second, the workshops provide an avenue through which parent leadership may be developed and fostered around issues related to their children's education.

"What Does Doing Well Really Mean?"

One of the workshops was, "What Does Doing Well Really Mean?" which focused on how people can tell whether or not they have learned something. IDRA conducted the workshop with parents, and later with a group of educators who are family outreach coordinators. The results with both groups were similar.

In the workshop, each participant responded to a series of questions concerning something he or she does well. The ques-

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The Intercultural Development Research Association *(IDRA)* is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity. The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, copyright ©1997) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

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The STAR Center is pleased to announce its new World Wide Web site:
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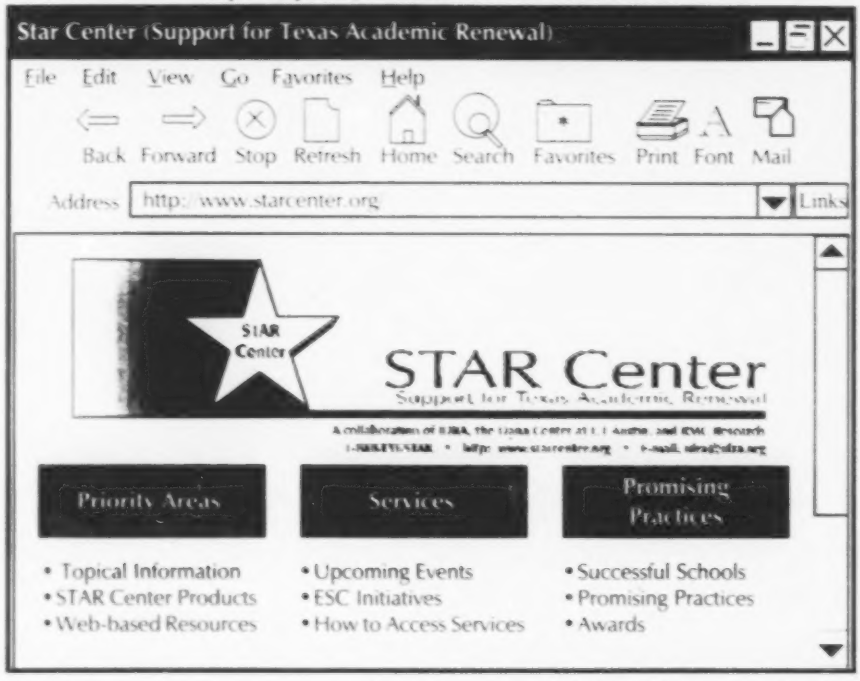

The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. It is a collaboration of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

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tion, "What is something that you do well?" brought out interesting responses:

- Listening skills: "Students come to me when they need assistance and they also refer their friends."
- Organization skills: "Others rely on me; I am enthusiastic and knowledgeable."
- Planning and organizational skills: "Outcomes are good evidence," "Results and outcomes are evidence."
- Listening skills: "Others find me attentive and easy to talk to," "I am easy to talk to; results and feedback are evidence."
- Good at-risk counselor: "The number of students referred to me."
- Good Ropes course instructor: "I have been instrumental in instituting the course at my campus."
- Gardener: "Finished product is good."
- Cook: "Product is good evidence."
- Seamstress: "Made dresses for weddings and special occasions."
- Cook: "Made the best ribs in the extended family."
- Service: "Gave good customer service on the job."
- Counselor: "Listened well."

Workshop leaders asked each respondent if his or her failure on a written test concerning the skill they identified would adequately reflect their competence. The answer was "no." With each of the skills shared, participants agreed that excellence is best measured by something other than a traditional written test.

As a result of this discussion, it became clear to educators and parents that measuring competence in real life, in adult circumstances, involves providing *proof through action and results*, rather than providing answers to a series of questions on a test. This realization was followed by a discussion of the movement in schools toward a variety of means for measuring student competence, means that include new assessment methods, such as projects and portfolios.

Parents responded to the workshop quite positively. One parent said:

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Two Innovative El Paso Schools Bring Together Teachers and the Community

Pam McCollum, Ph.D.

In 1993, IDRA received funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to conduct a study on the improvement of education for recent immigrant students over a three-year period. IDRA was one of four entities funded to conduct school-based collaborative research in distinct geographic regions of the country containing high concentrations of immigrant students. Three sites in Texas – Jane Long Middle School in Houston, and Bowie High School and Guillen Middle School in El Paso – comprised the Texas Immigrant Education Collaborative (TIEC).

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation set three broad goals for the project:

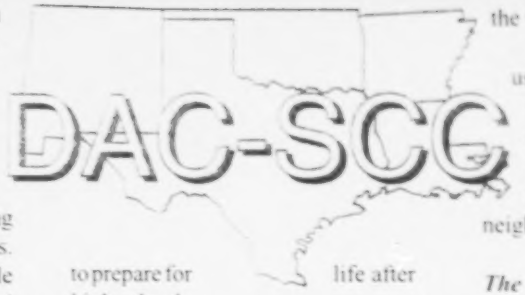
- Improve students' level of English proficiency.
- Improve students' level of academic achievement.
- Facilitate immigrant students' progress to post-secondary schooling or employment.

These goals were to be achieved collaboratively through the work of school-level personnel, community-based organizations, the business community and institutions of higher education. Our university collaborator in Houston was the University of Houston-Downtown, while the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) collaborated with us in El Paso.

The TIEC project provided educators the opportunity to determine how to serve recent immigrant students more effectively, how to design a plan for accomplishing the project's broad goals, and how to tailor proposed efforts to their particular student population and community. In effect, the project afforded educators the opportunity to "build space" in traditional school structures that often do not take immigrant students into account, particularly at the secondary level.

In general, the education of immigrant students faces several problems (McCollum and Garcia, 1996). These include

- a shortage of trained personnel to meet the specific needs of immigrant students;
- a lack of appropriate assessment policies and procedures;
- few curricular and programmatic alternatives for late entrant students to develop language, academic and life skills



to prepare for life after high school;

- an inflexible school structure; and
- a lack of resources allowing educators to collaborate to make necessary changes.

Futhermore, there are several obstacles to parent participation in schools (McCollum, 1996). These include

- a lack of understanding on the part of educators and parents,
- parents' jobs,
- language differences, and
- traditional attempts to "change" parents instead of valuing them.

This project worked to adapt existing practices and design new strategies in order to educate immigrant students more effectively. Forging links between the school and community was emphasized in order to facilitate immigrant students' transition into the world of work or continued schooling.

The participating schools in El Paso used a novel approach to forge their school-community connections. For one of their staff development days, they held a "community walk" that brought teachers out into the neighborhood where they taught.

The Community Walk

The high school faculty had tried traditional methods to attract parents to school, such as sending out Spanish and English bilingual fliers announcing parent meetings at the high school. But these were not successful. This prompted a volunteer from a community-based organization who works with the TIEC community task force to suggest a more novel approach for getting parents to come to school. He suggested the faculty step out into the neighborhood and show their interest in the community by conducting a community walk, or *la caminata de la communidad*. The volunteer had conducted such an activity the previous year at a school in New Mexico, and it proved to be very successful.

Teachers and Community - continued on page 5

Did You Know?

What steps need to be taken for significant family involvement in your school?

- Assess status quo (using, e.g., Survey of Campus Readiness instrument)
- Establish a philosophy that values all students and a vision for family involvement
- Form a team for change; involve others; broaden involvement
- Enable "buying into" the new philosophy
- Survey parent needs
- Develop a framework for family involvement by:
  - Determining roles and responsibilities
  - Scheduling training and other responses to staff needs for knowledge, skills, materials, etc.
  - Recruiting families
  - Reviewing expectations
  - Responding to family needs
  - Cultivating and sustaining family involvement
  - Moving toward shared responsibilities
  - Evaluating results
  - Planning for progress and renewal

Source: Hispanic Families as Valued Partners: An Educator's Guide (IDRA, 1993). See page 17.

Immigrant Students' Rights to Attend Public Schools

The National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS) has launched its annual *School Opening Alert* campaign to reaffirm the legal rights of all children who reside in the United States to attend public schools, regardless of immigration status. The fliers provide information for immigrant parents about the rights of their children to attend local public school this fall. IDRA is working with NCAS to make this alert available. NCAS can also provide a camera-ready copy of the alert in English and Spanish to be reproduced and distributed by schools and community groups. The copy of the alert below may be reproduced and used as well.

School Opening Alert

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled in *Plyler vs. Doe* [457 U.S. 202 (1982)] that undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Like other children, undocumented students are obliged under state law to attend school until they reach a mandated age.

As a result of the *Plyler* ruling, public schools may *not*:

- Deny admission to a student during initial enrollment or at any other time on the basis of undocumented status.
- Treat a student differently to determine residency.
- Engage in any practices to "chill" the right of access to school.
- Require students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status.
- Make inquiries of students or parents that may expose their undocumented status.
- Require social security numbers from all students, as this may expose undocumented status.

Students without social security numbers should be assigned a number generated by the school. Adults without social security numbers who are applying for a free lunch and/or breakfast program on behalf of a student, need only indicate on the application that they do not have a social security number.

Recent changes in the F-1 (student) Visa Program *do not* alter the *Plyler* obligations to undocumented children. These changes apply only to students who apply for a student visa from outside the United States.

Finally, school personnel – especially building principals and those involved with student intake activities – should be aware that they have no legal obligation to enforce U.S. immigration laws.

Llamada Urgente

En 1982, El Tribunal Supremo de los Estados Unidos decidió en el caso titulado *Plyler vs. Doe* [457 U.S. 202] que los niños y los jovenes indocumentados tienen el mismo derecho de asistir a las escuelas públicas de primaria y secundaria que el que tienen sus contrapartes de nacionalidad estadounidense. Al igual que los demás niños, los estudiantes indocumentados están obligados a asistir a la escuela hasta que lleguen a la edad escolar requerida por la ley.

Bajo la decisión *Plyler*, las escuelas publicas *no* pueden:

- negarle la matricula a un estudiante basándose en su situación legal y/o inmigratoria, ya sea a principios del curso o durante cualquier otro momento en el año escolar.
- tratar a un estudiante en forma desigual para determinar su situación legal y/o de residencia.
- poner en efecto prácticas cuyo resultado sea el obstruir el derecho de acceso de un estudiante a los servicios escolares.
- requerir que un estudiante o sus padres revelen o documenten su situación legal y/o inmigratoria.
- investigar la situación legal y/o inmigratoria de un estudiante o de sus padres, aún cuando sólo sea por razones educativas, ya que esto puede poner en evidencia dicha situación.
- exigir que un estudiante obtenga un número de seguro social como pre-requisito de matricula a un programa escolar.

La escuela debe de asignar un número de identificación a los estudiantes que no tienen tarjeta de seguro social. En cuanto a los padres sin números de seguro social, sólo les hace falta indicar eso en el formulario cuando solicitan el programa de almuerzo y/o desayuno gratis para sus hijos.

Los últimos cambios del Programa de Visado F-1 (de estudiantes) *no cambiarán* las obligaciones antedichas en cuanto a los niños indocumentados. Se aplican solo a los estudiantes que solicitan del extranjero un visado de estudiantes.

Finalmente, el personal escolar – especialmente directores de las escuelas y los secretarios generales – deben saber que no tiene ninguna obligación legal de imponer a otros las leyes migratorias de los Estados Unidos.

To report incidents of school exclusion or delay or to order free copies of this flier call [Para denunciar incidentes de exclusión escolar o retraso a clases o pedir este folleto gratis llame a]:

NCAS	Nationwide	(Spanish-SP/English-EN)	800-441-7192
META	Nationwide	(SP/EN/Kreyol-KR)	617-628-2226
NY Immigration Hotline	Nationwide	(SP/EN/18 Other)	718-899-4000
MALDEF	Texas	(SP/EN)	210-224-5476
MALDEF	California	(SP/EN)	213-629-2512

Teachers and Community - continued from page 3

The main purpose of the community walk was to have teachers acquaint themselves with the community their students live in by walking through the neighborhood, learning about significant landmarks and interacting with residents. Apart from raising teachers' awareness about the community, a secondary purpose of the activity was to give parents and teachers a chance to interact. Parents were encouraged to join the *caminata* and return to Bowie High School for lunch.

Meeting parents on their own "turf" is rarely done in large urban school districts where teachers typically live outside the school district and commute to and from the neighborhood for work. Nevertheless, the idea of the "walk" immediately appealed to the project's community task force and to Bowie High School's principal, who reserved the school's first full day of staff development training the following September for the event.

The walk's organizing committee named itself *la comunidad unida* and met six times from June to August of 1994. Individual volunteers from the community and representatives of community-based organizations that had experience in volunteer work primarily comprised the committee along with teachers from Bowie High School and Guillen Middle School. The magnitude of their task included securing permission from the city council to hold the walk, securing a parade permit, recruiting police officers to oversee the event, and providing water and planning restroom stops for the participants. Monetary donations were solicited from local businesses to cover the cost of permits and other necessary items. In-kind donations consisted of a first aid station, a public address system, day-care services, buttons for committee members, bakery goods and bottled water.

The walk stirred a good deal of action in a normally quiet neighborhood not used to seeing teachers walking its streets. It started at 8 a.m. at the neighborhood community center. It began with welcome comments by the principals of Bowie High School and Guillen Middle School. The district's city councilman, defined the event as a demonstration that the community could bond together to provide a safe environment for its children. The opening concluded with a blessing from a neighborhood priest. Teachers received a flier at the gathering from *la comunidad unida* which read:

> Our community houses the children you teach, counsel and guide. You are invited to visit their homes, learn about their community, their history, their environment and, most of all, learn about them and the people of their community. Look, listen and enjoy your visit. Welcome – *Bienvenidos*.

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY WALK WAS TO HAVE TEACHERS ACQUAINT THEMSELVES WITH THE COMMUNITY THEIR STUDENTS LIVE IN BY WALKING THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD, LEARNING ABOUT SIGNIFICANT LANDMARKS AND INTERACTING WITH RESIDENTS...MEETING PARENTS ON THEIR OWN "TURF" IS RARELY DONE IN LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS WHERE TEACHERS TYPICALLY LIVE OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND COMMUTE TO AND FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD FOR WORK.

The walk covered approximately 30 city blocks. At two of the stops, a group of *matachines* (ceremonial dancers of Aztec origin) danced for the participants. The group was composed of 11 students from the area who ranged in grades from elementary school to high school, and a man who was the drummer, teacher and leader. Students were dressed in traditional costumes.

The walk route took participants through housing projects and past community centers, social service agencies and important landmarks. The local media covered the event. Once the participants reached the end of the route, buses took them to Bowie High School where the principal and Guillen Middle School's principal spoke to the group. Afterward, everyone shared a lunch provided by Bowie High School.

Was it Worth it for the Parents?

IDRA conducted interviews with 15 of the participants (11 teachers and four parents). Mrs. Silva (pseudonym), a parent, said:

> There are many times when parents are afraid to speak to teachers. Maybe it's because of their English. But since the walk, I've seen a change. Since the walk, we've had a lot of success getting parents to come to school. Let me tell you about our people. We are humble and sometimes we don't speak to teachers because of that. Now I see a difference.

When asked if she thought the teachers gained something from the walk, she responded:

> *Pues, si. La confianza* [Well, yes, confidence]. They gained confidence because when we went walking, people applauded them in some areas. They hung out the windows and cheered. They cheered, 'Bravo, there are the teachers!' And now there's more understanding of the school on the

Teachers and Community - continued on page 6

UPCOMING EVENTS

HACU Annual Conference
Building the Academic, Technological and Cultural Affirmation Links to the Future

Hosted by
Hispanic Association of
Colleges and Universities

October 25-28, 1997
San Antonio, Texas

For more information,
call 210/692-3805, ext. 25
e-mail: hacupr@hispanic.com

Texas Migrant Education Conference
Charting Effective Practices – Navigating Toward Student Success

November 19-21, 1997
Corpus Christi, Texas

For more information,
call Dr. Lupe Morales at
Education Service Center Region 2
(512/833-9288)

Fifth Annual IDRA
La Semana del Niño
Early Childhood Educator's Institute

April 20-23, 1998
San Antonio, Texas

For more information, call Hilaria Bauer or
Carol Chavez at 210/684-8180
e-mail: idra@idra.org

Teachers and Community - continued from page 5

part of the parents.

Mrs. Silva described the route of the walk in detail and said the lunch afterwards was especially nice. She particularly liked the fact that many people who normally did not have a chance to interact were able to spend time together – police officers, school security officers, janitors, parents and teachers. She said, "*Estuvo bello!* It's the first time I've seen something like that. *La unión hace la fuerza* [There's strength in numbers]."

Many parents echoed this same sentiment with similar comments. Another woman, Mrs. Chávez (pseudonym), said:

> *Ahora las comunidades están unidas, y es bonito. Pienso que conociéndonos es como vamos a solucionar problemas en la comunidad donde estamos viviendo* [Now the communities are united and it's beautiful. I think that by knowing each other, we will solve the problems of our community].

Mrs. Silva also thought the walk was something to which everyone could relate:

> It was something that made the community happy. There were so many people. It was beautiful, beautiful! Many people were delighted with it. They had *matachines* from the community, and people were delighted. It had a positive impact. *Yo pienso que el profesorado de cualquier escuela tiene que tener el corazón en la mano para querer a su alumno* [I think teachers from any school need to show they care deeply about their students]. It came out on television also. It was positive for me and for my community. I even heard that our arch rival down the street wants to participate next year.

Did Teachers Benefit?

The community walk is an example of what J. Epstein describes as "collaborating with the community" (1995). It is only one type of collaboration within a model comprised of five other components:

- Parenting
- Communicating
- Volunteering
- Learning at home
- Decision making

The model involves forming partnerships among parents, schools and communities to improve education.

The following are characteristics of successful collaboration programs:

- Progress is incremental as families and schools learn to work together.
- Connections are made to curricular and instructional reform.
- Staff development is redefined as an active form of developing staff talents and capacities.

In addition to acquiring advanced knowledge and improved skills, teachers need to acquire new values and conceptions of practice that disprove the commonly held notion that disadvantaged students are unable to attain high standards (Brophy, 1988).

All of the participating teachers that IDRA interviewed agreed that their past experiences with staff development training had, for the most part, been unsatisfactory. They also reported that they enjoyed being able to *actively* expand their awareness and examine their professional values and commitments.

The walk served to enlighten new as well as experienced teachers. Those who were new to El Paso and to teaching were surprised by the poverty of the area, yet they recognized other "rich" aspects of the community as well. Even a former resident profited from the experience by learning that changes had taken place in the area. She reflected that those changes – the existence of gangs that are identified with particular subareas of the neighborhood – have implications for her teaching practices. Knowing where students live and what areas must be crossed in order to get to school enlightens teachers as to what might endanger students, and thus explains to the teachers why students sometimes do not care how well their assignment is done when they are kept after school. They want to finish quickly and get home safely.

Being aware of children's backgrounds made some teachers reflect on the gap between the formal school curriculum and its relevance to students' lives outside the classroom. There was the recognition that students who are worried over problems of their existence and/or conflict in the home may not devote the same amount of time to studying items in the curriculum that may seem trivial in comparison. Such recognition of the gap between the formal school curriculum and the practices and knowledge of the community opens the door to making instruction more relevant to students.

Teachers from both campuses offered excellent suggestions for future community walks. All wished to have more contact with parents. Teachers who are not bilingual were reminded of the asset that dual language

Teachers and Community - continued on page 11

STAR Center Parent Involvement Activities

One of the STAR Center's priority areas is parent, family and community involvement in order to support the development and implementation of creative strategies for building partnerships between parents, families, communities and schools to foster high academic achievement for all students. The emphasis for the coming school year will be to provide specialized training of trainers sessions in six education service centers (ESC) regions. ESCs will use a needs assessment approach to choose specific topic areas, and the STAR Center will focus its training in those areas this fall. These sessions will reflect a comprehensive approach to parental involvement training. This past summer, STAR Center staff members developed the training of trainers materials.

The STAR Center also works to support the development of practical products concerning school-family partnerships that communicate a wide range of information to client audiences. For example, the STAR Center is preparing information to disseminate about parent centers that are being developed. This information is being presented at conferences in Texas.

In addition to the training of trainers sessions during the coming months, STAR Center staff members will serve as facilitators for the Texas Education Agency's parent involvement training. They are also preparing a review of literature in parental involvement and descriptions of exemplary programs. This information will be posted on the STAR Center web site (www.starcenter.org).

The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. It is a collaboration of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), RMC Research Corporation, and the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin. For information about STAR Center services call 1-888-FYI-STAR.

School Improvement, Parent Involvement and Prevention

Dorothy L. Knight, M.S. and Joseph L. Vigil, M.S.

Community action as a means of decreasing violence and drug use has proven successful when schools, parents and communities unite. This vision has made the subject of parental involvement an integral piece of the discussion at various conferences across the nation. In Washington, D.C., this past June, the conference, Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools: Turning Research Into Action, supported the vision of parental and community involvement. Vice President Albert Gore Jr. opened this conference with a strong message of "zero tolerance" for drugs, violence and weapons in our schools. He also emphasized the importance of effective prevention programs and school improvement.

The involvement of parents and communities constitutes a strategy of all school improvement initiatives, including violence and drug use prevention programs. Since the social and economic culture of homes and communities influence students in their learning and personal behavior, prevention programs can unify all efforts to provide consistent messages that influence the development of values in young people. These values are reflected in the attitudes of youth toward learning, working and ultimately becoming a contributing member of the community.

A close examination of the nature of effective prevention programs and school improvement strategies reveals some striking similarities in the goals and methods of each. Since the goal of prevention programs is to create the social and academic conditions necessary to support students in learning and maintaining healthy behavior, schools engaged in the active process of improvement are more likely to implement strategies that increase student achievement by improving the environment as well as the learning methodology.

Recent research documenting the characteristics of successful schools reveals that a *foundation of core beliefs*, such as the belief that all students can learn, not only builds academic success but also forms the basis for effective prevention programs in schools. Such core beliefs, usually reflected in the school's vision statement, create an atmosphere of caring and respect for individual abilities that affects the students as well as the staff, parents and community of a school. This caring atmosphere in turn results in high expectations and a high level of commitment to achievement. Schools supporting such core beliefs also develop the foundation for the prevention of violence and drug use by providing an environment that builds the protective factors needed to enhance student resiliency.

An environment that nurtures students, staff and parents encourages the development of *collaborative learning* for students, staff and parents. Understanding how to work and share with others yet maintain individual perspective plays an important role in developing the skills necessary for young people to interact in positive ways with their peers and not be dominated by peer culture. Thus, collaborative learning provides the basis for many prevention programs that focus on peer group interaction.

In addition to school environment and collaborative learning, many school improvement instructional methodologies share vital characteristics of violence and drug use prevention strategies. *Higher order thinking skills* are the tools needed to understand *how to use* information. These skills form the foundation for making connections, drawing logical conclusions and making rational decisions in everyday situations, including whether or not to use drugs and violence as coping or problem-solving mechanisms. *Interdisciplinary learning*, which is the integration of academic learning across all subject areas, provides a means of weaving information and decision-making skills into the academic content areas. This integration connects learning with life skills, as is evident in violence and drug use prevention curricula.

Another school improvement strategy involves *transition programs*, such as vertical teaming. Vertical teaming involves the pairing of teachers from different grade levels to support the teaching staff in understanding the academic needs of students as they move from one grade to another. It also forms an important strategy in violence and drug use prevention by focusing on issues of social adjustment as students move from one level of school to another. Parent education and involvement are essential in supporting students as they move through critical transition stages.

Communication provides the key element needed for parents to work with their children, schools and communities in order to ensure safe and drug-free schools and communities. Establishing an open dialogue between these entities for the expression of needs, fears, expectations and commitments can help build partnerships. These partnerships, if successful, will in turn play a critical role in the success of our children and future generations. With such an important outcome riding on the effectiveness of these endeavors, we cannot afford to fail.

The strategy of increasing parent and community involvement, especially in the secondary schools, deserves the attention and resources of schools, especially as they become centers that support children in growing up to be healthy and productive adults. Full participation of families will require schools to adopt strategies that make each campus a place that welcomes and supports all parents and family members.

Vice President Gore talked about the *Gun-Free Schools Act* and "zero tolerance" for weapons in the schools at the conference in Washington, D.C. Students experience enough difficulties trying to succeed in school without the threat of weapons and violence around them. The vice president encouraged participants to continue seeking creative solutions to the challenge of decreasing drug use and violence in schools and communities. School improvement initiatives that increase parent involvement provide the foundation for successful prevention programs.

Dorothy Knight is an educator with the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at

School Improvement - *continued on page 20*

REFLECTIONS

Carmen Prieto Cortez

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "UNA PERSONA EDUCADA"

Editor's Note: This issue of the IDRA Newsletter, *focusing on parent, family and community involvement, is dedicated to the memory of Carmen Prieto Cortez. Carmen was vice president and chief operating officer of AVANCE, a parent education program based in San Antonio. She died in an auto accident on June 30,1997. Her leadership helped make the AVANCE program become a national model for low-income communities that has spread to Houston, the Rio Grande Valley, including border cities, and the* colonias. *Austin, Dallas, Corpus Christi, El Paso and Puerto Rico. It has impacted more than 60,000 families. Carmen's husband is Dr. Albert Cortez, director of the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership. In her honor, the article below is an excerpt from a speech she presented on the occasion of Hispanic Heritage Month.*

During our lifetime, our Hispanic heritage was suppressed and at times denied and rejected. It was allowed to be cultivated only by the hidden presence of our family. Today, times have changed. Having a Hispanic heritage is something positive we should acknowledge and appreciate. In doing so, we celebrate differences among the ethnic groups that comprise American society. We also recognize that we are a country of cultural pluralism from which strength and greatness is derived.

The majority of Hispanics in the United States today are a suffering people. A select few of us comprise a minority within a minority, a group called the "exceptions." We are the exceptions because we supposedly have "made it." We were able to overcome the effects of subliminal and occasional outright prejudice and discrimination. Many of us rose from poverty.

All of this did not happen by chance but only by design. There were events and experiences occurring constantly, along with significant people present throughout our lives, who channeled our restless energy into positive directions. These people unobtrusively guided and advised us, deliberately opened doors for us and enlightened us. They instilled in us values and attitudes that have helped us maneuver ourselves in and out of different cultural contexts. This programming could have come from a mother, father, sibling, relative, teacher, friend or stranger. He or she may have been brown-skinned, black-skinned or white-skinned. More than likely, it was a combination of all of these types of human beings. The bottom line is that there have been individuals throughout your lifetime who have said and done things that have changed the course of events for you.

It is up to those of us who are somewhat healthy – socially, educationally, economically and politically – to spend time in healing our children, our families, our institutions, our government and our country. But what is it we have to heal? What wounds do we have to close? What do we want to nurture back to health? There are many issues that need our attention in our ethnic group such as substance and chemical abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse and neglect, unemployment, housing, runaways, domestic violence and AIDS. I can only briefly highlight the area of education, today.

The greatest, single negative that is impacting our people's educational status is their economic well-being. The poverty rate of Hispanic families with 6- to 17-year-old children is 35.2 percent compared with 41.9 percent among Blacks and 13.5 percent among Whites. In San Antonio, the average household income of an AVANCE participant in 1988 was $6,812. We know that this translates into one in three Hispanic children being poor in this country. How is poverty impacting our children's success in school? These are the facts:

Fact number one: Poor teens fall behind their peers. Hispanic youths hampered by poverty and language barriers are almost three times as likely to have repeated a grade. Hispanic 12- to 15-year-olds are about two and a half times as likely as Whites to be two or more grades behind in school. By age 17, one in six Hispanics has fallen at least two years behind their expected grade level and nearly two in five have fallen one year behind.

Fact number two: Poverty often spells poor skills. Poor teenagers are four times more likely than non-poor teenagers to have below-average basic academic skills. According to the National Assessment for Education Progress Testing results, Hispanic and Black 17-year-olds have reading, math and science skills comparable to the skills of White 13-year-olds. Hispanic high school graduates are only half as likely as White graduates to have taken advanced math and science courses. Hispanics are also more likely to be placed in watered-down general or vocational classes. Of those Hispanics who have managed to graduate, rarely have they taken the full academic program that would prepare them for higher education or future employment.

Fact number three: Poor teens are more likely to drop out. Regardless of race, poor youths are almost three times more likely than their well-off peers to drop out. In 1986, more than one in four poor 18- to 20-year-olds had dropped out of high school compared to one in 10 of their non-poor peers. In 1988, there were six dropouts for every 10 graduates among Hispanics.

Fact number four: Poor children often get a weak start in life. Poor parents are less likely to afford pre-natal care, which increases their baby's risk of being born at low birth weight, a condition that can lead to learning disabilities. As they grow older, poor children are less likely to receive the key building blocks of early development, such as adequate nutrition, decent medical care, and a safe and secure environment. Children who are poorly nourished and ill are less alert, less curious and interact less effectively with their environment than healthy children, making them generally less prepared to start school than the more affluent youngsters.

Persona Educada *- continued on page 9*

Fact number five: Poor children are more likely to attend schools with poor resources. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often need an enriched educational experience to overcome early learning deficits and the special problems that stem from persistent poverty. They need the highest quality teachers, the most advanced classroom equipment, a low student-teacher ratio and educational programs that supplement classroom training. On the contrary, these are the realities: In 1986, more than 70 percent of Hispanic students compared with 63 percent of Blacks were enrolled in predominantly minority schools. That means that 50 percent or more of the student body was minority. Almost one-third of Hispanic students are enrolled in intensely segregated schools. That means that 90 percent or more are minority. Segregated schools generally lack the resources needed to provide students with a competitive education. There is blatant disparity in the funding levels between many predominantly minority and non-minority schools.

Fact number six: Young people in poor communities receive few opportunities to grow outside the classroom. The lessons learned in school are reinforced and applied at home and in the community. Too often, however, the weak learning experiences that many disadvantaged youth have at school are mirrored in their homes and community. Their parents often lack the credentials and skills they are hoping their children will acquire. Poor youths are more likely than their non-poor peers to have parents who have not completed high school. Research has shown us that parent's education level remains one of the strongest predictors of their children's success in school. Poverty breeds poverty. School achievement breeds school achievement.

What do we have to do to eliminate this vicious cycle? If many of us were raised in poverty by parents who did not even make it into high school, then there is hope for those who are caught in a social, educational and economic treadmill. What happened to those of us who are the exceptions? The minority within the minority? I would like to offer some ideas for better understanding our plight – what needs to be set in place or repaired within a cultural context.

When I was first approached about the topic of Hispanics and educational applications for the 90s, I immediately thought of my mother, who constantly reminded me as I was growing up what it meant to be a *persona educada*, an educated person. When she would refer to an educated person, she was talking about a person of character, of integrity – a person who upheld high standards for himself or herself and for others. An educated person was not necessarily one who had many years of formal schooling; he or she was an individual who knew how to behave properly. In retrospect, I realize my mother was instilling in me the blueprint for how I should perceive myself and how I should act toward others. Now as I read the state-of-the-art literature on Hispanics, there appears this concept of *persona educada*. So this didn't just happen to me. It probably happened to all other Hispanics who have "made it."

Even though my family met the poverty guidelines – my parents were migrants as children, my father only went to the fourth grade and my mother to the sixth – my family life experience has taught me to strive to be *una persona educada*. In order for that message to be internalized and actualized, it had to have been accompanied by some very basic values. Now I realize what those values are and how I must constantly maintain them in order to function well. Working at AVANCE in the public school systems enabled me to see that when this concept is not allowed to take root fully and the basic values for healthy living are not instilled early on, the consequences result in a dysfunctional individual.

I believe that the many social and educational problems facing Hispanic families today stem from external conditions not allowing their culturally based values to help them develop and grow to be happy and healthy individuals. The premise or principles for living that I am referring to have been coined by a good friend and colleague of mine. He calls it *cara y corazón* – face and heart.

To understand this, we must understand that life moves in a circle and in order for true integrated growth to take place, it must be based on the balanced principles of *dignidad* - dignity, *respeto* - respect, *confianza* - trust in the form of true interdependent bonding and *cariño* - love. In many poor Hispanic families, these four values are traumatized and in need of healing. This healing needs to take place through the help, encouragement and support from those families who are balanced and healthy.

The first of these, *dignity*, proposes that the ancestral wisdom of Hispanic people carries the teachings and makes them necessary for growth and healing to take place. We have acknowledged that these abstract resources are present today, as they have been throughout time. These resources are available within the circle of life. The motivation for family growth and dignity must come from within the family and its desire or need to change, if and when it becomes necessary.

The second value that must be present is based on *respect*. This vision for oneself based on respect carries with it knowledge and acceptance of one's historical past ethnic history. Knowing where you came from is a prerequisite for knowing where you are going. Many of our Hispanic children today do not know who they are, why they are and where they came from. They are lacking the experiences such as family traditions, rituals and ceremonies that tell them these pieces of information.

The third of these, *trust*, is critical to healthy relationships. The ability to have trust develops where there is a resource of strength, a source of healing, as well as a ritual. From this element comes interdependence, a healthy giving and taking, reciprocal and mutual support always available, always taking place. *Confianza*, or trust, leads to a feeling of being accepted and belonging. When this value is not nurtured in healthy ways, children act out. And children grow up to be adults who do not trust anybody but themselves and do not care about anybody but themselves.

The fourth of the basic values needed for balanced living is *love*. Love is essential in order to participate in a circular learning process. This feeling of receiving love first appears from within the family. If and when that happens properly, it can be received and given beyond the boundaries of the family. It extends to other individuals, families, communities and institutions. For if one loves oneself, he or she is

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This really helped me understand some problems my daughter was having. She kept complaining about homework and tests. Now, I have a better idea of why. A project may be a better way to find out if my daughter knows how to do something!

This training approach has worked well because it provides interaction, draws on the experience of the participants and presents numerous opportunities to validate the abilities and contributions of the parents and the educators.

Because several community-based organizations participate in the project, meetings take place at various times on alternate days in order to better accommodate parents' work schedules and child care needs. In addition, all materials used and disseminated in the parent workshops are bilingual (written in Spanish and English). The use of bilingual materials that are interactive and free of jargon make the workshops inviting for all parents, regardless of language ability or level of education.

Benefits and Outcomes of the Project

The IDRA Community Leadership for Standards-Based Reform project has been funded for two years, and the projected benefits and outcomes are meaningful and will be long-lasting. While adults in the community serve as the project's primary participants, the children in the community receive the ultimate benefits. As a result of parents' increased awareness of and interest in school-related issues, students will perform better in school.

Specific projected outcomes for the project include the following:

THIS TRAINING APPROACH HAS WORKED WELL BECAUSE IT PROVIDES INTERACTION, DRAWS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND PRESENTS NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES TO VALIDATE THE ABILITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PARENTS AND THE EDUCATORS.

- **Increased community awareness concerning academic standards**.
- **Awareness and understanding of academic standards and implications.** Parents, community members and educators will be more informed about academic standards and their implications. Since these individuals all play an important role in the education of children, their knowledge and understanding will help increase student success in school. As taxpayers and citizens, individuals have an obligation to know about issues that affect their community, especially those that affect children. Widespread community awareness of how academic standards affect students will enable the whole community to meet the challenges that systemic changes bring to students and their families.
- **Community accountability for children**. The project's design makes information about academic standards accessible to the whole community, thereby making each individual accountable for the successful schooling of everyone's children. As a community member, every individual in Corpus Christi is responsible for ensuring that students leave the public school system competent and able to meet the challenges of post-secondary education and the job sector. Parents, educators, community leaders and business leaders all share responsibility for supporting one another and providing students with the adequate time, attention and resources needed for meeting future challenges.
- **Parent advocacy and leadership**. Many parents do not take an active role in school-related activities and issues for various reasons, some of which are limited English proficiency, work schedules, an unwelcoming school environment and/or a sense of intimidation. Participation in the project's workshops affords parents an opportunity to learn about and discuss issues related to their children's education, namely academic standards. They allow parents to learn from and empower one another in a non-threatening, supportive environment.

The project achieves parent empowerment by having parents grow comfortable with particular issues and with each other through discussion and mutual support. The role of the parent is continually validated, and parents gain access to information they can use to make more informed decisions concerning their children's education. As a result, they will be able to communicate more effectively with teachers and administrators about their children.

Challenges

One of the greatest challenges facing

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totally accepting of that self. And this in turn allows one to be totally accepting of others. When the self-love is not present, one's self-concept and self-esteem are very poor. Where this condition exists, children cannot perform because they do not believe they are capable of doing anything good or right. Among many of our poor Hispanic children, there is always a lingering doubt about being able to achieve. And often they just give up because they do not believe that what they will do will make a difference to anyone.

These four principles for living provide the indicators of an educated person. *Una persona educada*, an educated person, has *cara y corazón*. The *cara*, face, reflects the values of *dignidad*, dignity and *respeto*, respect. The *corazón* reflects the values of *confianza*, trust and *cariño*, love.

Cara y corazón comes from our parents. The *cara* from which dignity and respect come is given to us by our father or a significant male figure. The *corazón* from which trust and love come is given to us by our mother or a significant female caregiver. When *cara y corazón* are not fully present and the four basic premises for living are not able to be utilized for growth and development, there is an individual who is not able to function as a *persona educada*. And where this underlying foundation is missing or weak, there exists an incomplete person who oftentimes is dysfunctional and does not possess the inner strength to overcome obstacles.

We possess *cara y corazón* today because it was made possible by our families and others along our life's path. Unfortunately, too many of our Hispanic families do not. I propose to you that if you now know that these four essential elements for living – dignity, respect, trust and love – are lacking among the majority of your brown-skinned brothers and sisters, then you have an obligation to make possible the experiences that will bring these elements out. It is up to you to accept the fact that you can make a difference somewhere and then act upon that decision in the arena where you feel most comfortable.

Thinking about Learning - *continued from page 10*

the project thus far has been parent recruitment and participation. As noted previously, various factors hinder parents' involvement in their children's educational experience. IDRA's experience and research (outlined in the publication, *Hispanic Families as Valued Partners: An Educator's Guide*) tells us that, oftentimes, parents simply are not valued by schools as partners in their children's education (Robledo Montecel, et al., 1993). Encouraging parents to attend yet another meeting is not always an easy task. The number of parents participating in project workshops thus far has been small. However, participating parents have had valuable opportunities to learn and share in small interactive groups.

As the project continues, the number of participating parents will increase as a result of more effective outreach conducted by the school personnel and community-based organizations. However, the small-group, interactive, parent-friendly, bilingual approach will remain an essential element for the workshops' effectiveness.

There is a need for greater awareness of academic standards in Corpus Christi. As the country moves toward reforming the current education system, a greater need will exist for informing communities about academic standards and other systemic changes, as well as what those changes mean for the students and parents. As the responsibility for effective schooling expands throughout the community, resources will also be expanded and there will be better support for students' success.

Resources

Robledo Montecel, M. and A. Gallagher, A. Montemayor, A. Villarreal, N. Adame-Reyna, J. Supik. *Hispanic Families As Valued Partners: An Educator's Guide* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1993).

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Internet Web Sites for Parent, Family and Community Involvement

Center for Initiatives in Education www.ideal.swt.edu interalt
Children, Youth and Family www.cyfc.umn.edu
IDRA Desegregation Assistance Center – South Central Collaborative www.idra.org/dac-scc
Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy www.psu.edu/institutes/isal
Intercultural Development Research Association www.idra.org
National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) www.ncbe.gwu.edu
National Parent Information Network ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/npin/npinhome.html
ReadyWeb: ERIC Parent and Educators Site ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/readyweb/readyweb.html
Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development www-personal.ksu.edu/~rcled
STAR Center* (Support for Texas Academic Renewal) www.starcenter.org
Texas Education Agency www.tea.state.tx.us
Texas Literacy Resource Center tlrc.tamu.edu

Visalia Adult Education School www.otan.dni.us/cdlp/visalia/home.htm
Adult Literacy and Technology Network www.otan.dni.us/webform/alt/home.html
Alliance for Parental Involvement (ALLPIE) www.croton.com/allpie
America Goes Back to School www.ed.gov/Family/agbts
ASPIRA Association, Inc. www.incacorp.com/aspira
Empowering People www.empoweringpeople.com/index.html
Exploring Adult Literacy www.vcu.edu/eduweb/CRA/eal.html
Families and Education www.rmcres.com/famed
Family and Community Involvement www.mcrel.org/connect/family.html
Family Education Network www.familyeducation.com
Family Literacy www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit
Family Planet www.family.com
National Coalition of Advocates for Students www.ncas1.org
National Institute for Literacy novel.nifl.gov
Parents and Children Together On-line www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/fl/pcto/sh1.html
U.S. Department of Education Partnership for Family Involvement in Education www.ed.gov/PFIE/index.html
U.S. Department of Education Publications for Parents www.ed.gov/pubs/parents.html

Compiled by Dr. Chris Green, IDRA

**A collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.*

Teachers and Community - *continued from page 5*

skills provide within the community.

In summary, in the opinion of teachers and parents, the community walk accomplished its basic goals. It demonstrated good faith on the part of teachers to get to know the community where they work and also demonstrated their sincerity in advocating a heightened parent and community involvement in their schools. It provided an excellent example of the researcher Epstein's sense of collaborating with the community and demonstrated that teachers and parents can learn from one another. The community walk was a first step in breaking home-school barriers and establishing school, family and community partnerships where parties teach and assist each other.

Resources

Brophy, J. "Research Linking Teacher Behavior to Student Achievement," *Educational Psychologist* (1988) 23(3), 235-286.

Epstein, J. "School-Family-Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share," *The Kappan* (May, 1995) 701-712.

McCollum, P. "Obstacles to Immigrant Parent Participation in Schools," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, November-December 1996).

McCollum, P. and J. Garcia. "Immigrant Education from the Administrators' Perspective," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, November-December 1996).

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U.S. Department of Education's 1997 Improving America's Schools Regional Conferences

A Call to Action: Working Together for Equity and Excellence

General Assembly Sessions

Daily sessions will feature a variety of speakers, including officials from the U.S. Department of Education and educational leaders from across the nation.

Education Reform Institutes

These half-day institutes will focus on key topics in education reform within the context of the conference's overarching themes of equity, excellence and collaboration. The format and content of the institutes will focus on three major elements: research, collaborative demonstration models and implementation strategies. Participants will have the opportunity to attend two institutes. Institute topics include:

- Setting and Reaching High Standards
- Creating a Better School Environment
- Assessing Student Achievement
- Mastering Reading
- Mastering the Foundations of Mathematics
- Exploring Public School Options
- Promoting and Managing Change in Schools and Communities
- Recruiting, Preparing and Retaining Excellent Teachers
- Involving Families and Communities in Education
- Using Technology as a Tool for Education Reform
- Facilitating Higher Education, Work Transitions, Lifelong Learning

Technical Assistance Workshops

Each conference will offer a full day of technical assistance workshops for participants to learn more about how federal, state and local resources can be integrated to support education reform. Workshops will provide program-specific and cross-program technical assistance in the following areas: Title I, Goals 2000, Magnet Schools, Charter Schools, Homeless, Impact Aid, Bilingual Education, Special Education, Technology, Even Start, Migrant Education, Indian Education, Eisenhower Professional Development, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities, School-to-Work, Adult and Vocational Education, Integrated Reviews, Cooperative Audit Resolution, Waivers and more!

Technology and Media Resource Center

This center is structured to provide participants with more conference related information and materials. The center will feature a variety of hands-on computer demonstrations, a video review area and other innovative exhibits reflecting topics covered in the general sessions, institutes and workshops. Staff will be available to help you discover the wealth of tools and resources available to educators on the Internet.

Agenda

Day 1: ***A Call to Action: The Dept. of Education's Reform Agenda***

8:00 am-5:00 pm	Registration
2:00 pm-3:15 pm	General Assembly and Opening Ceremonies
3:30 pm-4:30 pm	Breakout Sessions: A closer look at the Department of Education's Reform Agenda.
4:45 pm-5:45 pm	Breakout Sessions (repeated)
6:00 pm-8:00 pm	Networking Reception

Day 2: ***The State of American Education***

8:00 am-5:00 pm	Registration
8:00 am-8:45 am	Continental Breakfast
9:00 am-12:00 pm	Education Reform Institutes
12:15 pm-2:15 pm	General Assembly Luncheon with U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley
2:30 pm-5:30 pm	Education Reform Institutes (repeated)

Day 3: ***Equity and Excellence in the 21st Century***

7:45 am-8:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30 am-9:30 am	General Assembly
9:45 am-12:00 pm	Cross-Program Technical Assistance Workshops
12:00 pm-1:00 pm	Lunch on your own
1:00 pm-4:30 pm	Program-Specific Technical Assistance Workshops

Who Should Attend?

- Federal, regional, state and local technical assistance providers
- Grantees, administrators and managers of programs administered by offices of the Department of Education
- Officials of state education agencies
- Officials of local education agencies
- School-based instructional leaders
- Teacher leaders and principals
- Officials of national and community-based educational organizations.

We strongly encourage participation by state and local teams. A group discount is available. Join us for three days of learning, networking and action-planning...

October 16-18, 1997 • San Diego, California
Host Center: Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center (Region XII)
(Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau)

November 16-18, 1997 • Dallas, Texas
Host Center: STAR Center (Region VIII)
(Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin)

December 14-16, 1997 • Washington, D.C.
Host Center: Region III Comprehensive Center
(Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Virgin Islands)

Contact the IAS Conference hotline at 1-800-203-5494 if you have any questions or concerns.
Also visit the conference web site for more information at www.ncbe.gwu.edu/iasconferences.

THE NURTURING OF PARENT LEADERSHIP

Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

For many years, IDRA has operated a model of parent leadership that is based on field experience with parents of children who are economically disadvantaged, minority or limited-English-proficient. Our model contains, roughly, four stages that are somewhat sequential: parents as teachers, as resources, as decision makers and as trainers. One of the parents we have worked with is Clementina Padilla (with 28 grandchildren) who has been part of the central organizing committee and a conference presenter. Speaking about the model, she shared her thoughts with us recently (see box below) in her beautiful and assertive Spanish.

Ms. Padilla's comments reflect a variety of results sought by IDRA and other collaborating groups in terms of parent leadership.

Through the national *Mobilization for Equity* project, funded by the Ford Foundation through the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS), IDRA has led an ongoing effort to develop a network of parents in Texas who work together to achieve the best possible education for all students. Support is also provided by the STAR Center (the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas and a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center and RMC Research Corporation).

Participants in this network, Families United for Education: Getting Organized [*Familias unidas para la educación: ganando organizadas*] (FUEGO), represent various school districts, distinct geographic areas and the spectrum of socio-economic and educational backgrounds of San Antonio. They have come together to share information and experiences in an effective way to promote greater awareness of education issues and to develop leadership. This article provides an overview of the four stages of our model and gives examples of how it has supported the development of the FUEGO network.

A Participating Parent Shares Her Perspective

"Para mi ha sido una oportunidad muy bonita de desenvolverme como lider. Me encanta eso porque tal vez ya lo trae uno dentro de si. Luego aqui lo he podido desarrollar. Ser un lider para mi es servir a la comunidad. Ser un lider no es estar en la punta de una organización. Es compartir con la comunidad.

"En este proceso hay una diversidad de liderazgo aqui entre nosotras y que bonito, unos en politica, otros en lo que es la educación, en inmigración, y por ejemplo mi liderazgo es en la familia – para mi es muy importante la familia. Mi familia es la familia de todos.

"Lo que mas he notado en este proceso es la confianza que nos han tenido. Nos han hecho sentir importantes. Nos han dejado que nos vayamos desenvolviendo con nuestras propias agallas de lider, aqui han hecho que crezcamos como lideres. Yo contribui en una manera muy especial, todo enfocado en la familia. Hay muchas familias muy disfuncionales, y esta fue una oportunidad de acercarme a muchas familias. Fui conferencista, asisti a todas las juntas y participé en las deliberaciones, y gracias por darnos esa participación."

["For me, this has been a beautiful opportunity to develop as a leader. But, I love that because perhaps one already has that inside. To me, being a leader means serving the community. Being a leader is not being at the head of an organization but rather sharing with the community.

["In this process there is a diversity of leadership among us, and that is beautiful. Some are in politics, some in education, others in immigration – and, for example, my leadership is with the family. The family is very important to me. My family is all families.

["What I have noted the most in this process is the trust you have given us. You have made us feel important. You have let us develop, with our own gutsy ideas of what leadership is, and you have made us grow as leaders. I contributed in a very special way with my focus on the family. There are many dysfunctional families and this was an opportunity to get closer to many families. I was a presenter. I attended all the planning meetings. I participated in all the deliberations, and thank you for allowing me to participate."]

– Clementina Padilla, participant, Mobilization for Equity at IDRA

Parents as Teachers

Parents are the first teachers of their children. For parents who need more self-confidence, this is an ego-boosting stage that helps them realize how much instruction through modeling they have already done for their children, regardless of educational background or economic status.

Many parent involvement programs are active in this area, and a variety of resources are available in most communities. The topics range from parenting skills and discipline at home, to how to help your child with his or her homework. One dilemma with many of these classes is that a deficit model often underlies the effort: There is something wrong with the parent that must be fixed, or there is something lacking which must be compensated. Oftentimes schools and community groups provide workshops for parents using topics such as parenting skills in order to bring parents into the school to attend a meeting.

At IDRA, our vision is to regard getting parents to meetings as merely a basic step, rather than the central core of a parent leadership program. For example, in the Mobilization for Equity effort, the *parents as teachers* sessions that our programs have offered include the following:

- What parents need to know about multicultural literature.
- The self-concept of a child and demonstrated love.
- Learning styles.

Parents as Resources

Parents are resources to the classroom and school campus. In our model, parents are made aware of the kinds of contributions they can make to a classroom and to a campus. The focus is, again, to strengthen the parent's self-concept and to assist schools in placing greater value on all parents. Parents should share instructional support roles with the school and not be seen solely as fund-raisers and volunteer laborers.

Nurturing of Parents - continued on page 14

Nurturing of Parents - continued from page 13

In the Mobilization for Equity process, IDRA has provided sessions related to *parents as resources* that include these topics:

- Parents advocating for the child with special needs.
- Parents conducting focus group interviews with other parents.

Parents as Decision Makers

Parents are decision makers in educational committees, boards and projects. This stage more clearly establishes a leadership role and requires much support to help parents assume the tasks of making decisions in groups, planning activities, carrying out independent projects and evaluating the results. Besides the existing formal committees and groups that either are parent leadership bodies or call for parent representation, many opportunities exist that encourage parents to become decision makers within schools.

A concern is that some campuses have a closed group of favored parents who are called upon to give support to pre-set goals and projects, and that the vast majority of parents are excluded from this stage.

The core group of FUEGO participants have functioned mainly as decision makers. They have decided – starting from scratch each time – to host conferences for parents by parents. All aspects of the conferences have been planned and executed by parents, from the initial stages of identifying resources to developing presentations and inviting presenters. Each conference has then been evaluated through a series of conversations so that each individual's leadership gets reviewed. Strengths and successes receive validation and notes are kept to improve the next effort.

Parents as Trainers

Parents are trainers of their peers. In this stage, the parents become teachers and facilitators so that their peers can learn and practice those skills developed in the previous three levels. Since nothing is learned so well as when a person has to teach it himself or herself, IDRA views this stage as the crowning event of parent leadership. Parents conduct surveys of parent needs and focus group interviews. They also conduct training on leadership and the specific topics they have learned about through their experiences and the training.

At each of the three conferences already held, parents from the core group served as emcees, presenters in workshops and leaders of feedback sessions at the close of each conference.

The parents have developed many workshops and are training other parents to be leaders. One workshop is specifically entitled "Parent Leadership."

Peer Support

The third and fourth stages are viewed as leadership roles, with the parent trainer teaching other parents to be leaders. In our Mobilization for Equity project, as we have concentrated on the decision maker and trainer stages, we have most focused on peer support.

Peer support remains critical because recurrent phenomena in leadership development is leader isolation, peer attack, discouragement and burnout. IDRA places major emphasis on nurturing all participants: emphasizing their strengths and successes, modeling the role of listening to each other, allowing for temporary absence from the group when family crises impinge without dropping anyone from the list, and allowing for decisions to come from the group.

During the first session after their most recent conference, the planners discussed the event, lessons learned and the process in general.

Participant Martha Ortiz said: "We

Nurturing of Parents - continued on page 16

IDRA's Parent Involvement Process

Parents as teachers	Helping families see what they have already contributed to the education of their children	The school validates the informal ways parents instruct their children in responding to their first words, using rhymes and games, and passing on family mores and wisdom. Parents and other family members can also be trained in effective ways to help children learn at home. At this stage, the school holds major responsibility for planning and carrying out activities. These activities for parents should be highly participatory and follow current research and practices in the effective instruction of adults. They should also encourage critical thinking and analysis.
Parents as resources to teachers	Supporting families' contributions in the classroom	Families realize the variety of ways they can contribute in the classroom to the teacher. With appropriate instruction and guidance, parents assist in the classroom in a number of roles.
Parents as decision makers	Giving the parents even more responsibility	At this stage, parents are trained and given responsibility to make decisions in groups. The context can be a newly formed parent committee or participation in an elected or appointed body within the school. Parents are trained and supported in learning, planning, assessing options and making decisions.
Parents as effective community leaders (trainers)	Supporting leaders as they begin to emerge from family involvement activities	Leadership training develops parents as teachers and coaches of other parents. At this stage, parents impart to other parents the skills they have learned progressing through increasingly challenging and engaged levels of participation. They help mentor new leaders and are advocates of their children's education and well-being.

Source: Adapted from *Hispanic Families as Valued Partners: An Educator's Guide* (IDRA, 1993). See Page 17

Parents Speak Out: Quality Education for All Children

Editor's Note: A dream becomes reality: Families from diverse backgrounds work together in a community to form an informed force of advocates for quality education for all children. For the past year and a half, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) – in collaboration with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), AVANCE, Parent Child Incorporated and other community organizations – has worked with a group of families who call themselves Families United for Education: Getting Organized [Familias unidas para la educación: ganando organizadas] (FUEGO). They have dedicated themselves to increasing parent leadership and empowerment in order to defend the rights of all students. This group has successfully coordinated citywide conferences and forums for discussing current educational issues. Having investigated some critical issues, the core members have participated in an ongoing discussion of how these issues impact their children and the public education system. In 1996, the group adopted eight fundamental guiding principles (see box on Page 16). In a recent interview by Anna Alicia Romero (A.A.R.), an IDRA education assistant, Grace Garza (G.G.), Sofia Olivares (S.O.), Sylvia Rodriguez (S.R.) and Aurelia Silva (A.S.) presented an overview of two of those principles: the education of immigrant children and bilingual education. Both issues are a part of the critical dialogue occurring locally, regionally and nationally. Below is an excerpt of that conversation.

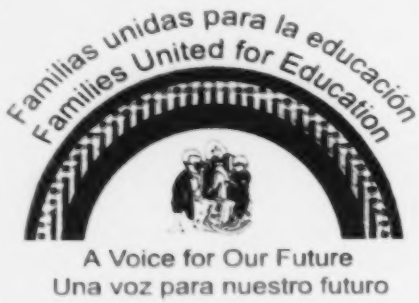
A.A.R.: Do children from recent immigrant homes deserve a high quality education from public schools?

S.O.: I think that it should be like religion, you give it free to everybody. Are they [illegal immigrants] going to be dumb immigrants? ...it's better to have [them] educated...at least they'll know how to read and write and everything. That should be our God-given right just like religion...

A.S.: If we're a democracy, it [education] has to be for everybody. That's the definition of a democracy...and when you pay taxes, then there should be representation...And if they're not educating the children, then it's taxation without representation.

G.G.: What hurts me the most, is that our government helps...other countries and when it comes to our own people, they shut the d_ _ _ door. Excuse me, but it's true! I think it's our duty because then, in turn, once they're educated and allowed to come into our schools, we hope that they in turn will help the next person, their community or help us [other] individuals.... We as taxpayers should not voice that opinion of saying, "Keep them out" or "Do away with them." No! ...I want to be part of that group [policy-makers] that does include educating any child, *every* child.

S.R.: We should [educate immigrant children]. If they are here already, why don't we just let them go to school? It would only help bring up our standards. Why does there always have to be someone at the bottom? And why do *we* always have to be at the bottom? ...It doesn't matter what race they are, if they are already here, why not educate them? They're going to be part of the system sooner or later, why not educate them? I



believe they should have a fair standing just like everybody else, even if you came over two, three, four generations ago. We all came over one way or another. It is supposed to be the land of the free.

A.A.R.: Should bilingualism and multiculturalism be welcomed and encouraged?

S.R.: We're doing it here [at FUEGO meetings]. It reinforces my Spanish. We've encouraged other parents to be more active and we have a larger group of parental involvement because we use both English and Spanish. It takes a little longer [in meetings], but everyone understands.

S.R.: I think [bilingual education] is positive. It will only make them [limited-English-proficient students] learn English faster when they're being taught in their home language. It gives them a very strong background. By having a strong background in their own home language, that'll only reinforce their learning in English. It only makes sense...and it doesn't show their true intelligence when they are taught only in English. But by all means, you need a teacher who can speak the student's language. You've got to make sure that they have their proper credentials and that they do know how to speak Spanish or whatever language. Sometimes they [administrators] just grab anyone, a teacher from another class, just because it says in the budget that they need a teacher. And that hurts the kids... the kids lose a lot of learning time. You need to make sure teachers are certified. We need to be encouraged to speak English as well as our home language and never be punished for that. Our parents went through that and, consequently, because of that we did not learn, well in my case, the Spanish that I should have learned.

A.S.: Well, I went through a schizophrenia all my life... what happens is that in elementary, they tell you, "You've got to forget Spanish" and you just believe some of the myths. Well, when I was a first grade teacher, one of the things that parents would always say is that they did not want their children in bilingual education. So, one of the things I had to do is talk to them about how bilingual education would help their children. They would say things like, "*Pues, mando a mi niño para que aprenda inglés, no para que aprende español* [Well, I send my child to learn English, not to learn Spanish.]" So, what you have to do is explain to them how the resources that they have will help them learn English and...that the background that they already have will help them learn English. If I were to say to...the children, "Well, you can only speak English," I wouldn't get very far with them. So, it's very critical, especially at the elementary school level, to talk to parents because a lot

***Parents Speak Out** - continued on page 16*

Parents Speak Out - continued from page 15
of times they don't understand what it's all about.

I.A.R.: Is English necessary to succeed in this country?

A.S.: Well, how do you define *succeed*? I think that's the key. What certain people see as success is not necessarily what everybody *else* sees as success...I would like everybody to have access to [education], and I think that what is faulty with our system is that not everybody has access to...learning English as a second language in a natural, unintimidating way, and adults don't have that either. So, I think we need to provide those opportunities for them to learn English in a very unintimidating situation. I'm 50 years old, and my generation, all the people that I went to school with, raised their children only speaking English because they felt that they would be more successful in school, and guess what? Now they're...saying, "I should have taught them Spanish too"...

Anna Alicia Romero is an education assistant in the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership. Comments and questions may be sent to her via E-mail at idra@idra.org.

Important Principles for Education
Principios importantes para educación

Editor's note: The principles for education listed below were developed by parents and community members who are participating in the Mobilization for Equity project at the Intercultural Development Research Association.

- ✔ Parents have a right to be involved in decision making at the schools their children attend.
  Los padres tienen el derecho de formar parte de los comités que toman decisiones en las escuelas donde asisten sus hijos.
- ✔ Every individual will be respected regardless of class, position, education or manner of speaking.
  Cada individuo sera respetado sin importar su clase, posición, educación o manera de hablar.
- ✔ Bilingualism and multiculturalism will be welcomed and encouraged in all parent events and educational programs in schools.
  El uso de varios idiomas y aceptación de distintas culturas sé promoverá en toda junta de padres y en los programas educativos dentro de nuestras escuelas.
- ✔ All children, especially children from economically disadvantaged, minority, non-English speaking or recent immigrant homes, deserve a high quality education from public schools.
  Todo niño, especialmente niños pobres, que pertenezcan a una minoría, y aquellos que no hablan inglés o que son de familias recien inmigradas, merecen una educación de alta calidad en nuestras escuelas públicas.
- ✔ All public schools should receive necessary financial support to provide a high quality education.
  Toda escuela pública debe de recibir los fondos necesarios para proveer una educación de alta calidad.
- ✔ Parents should hold schools accountable for providing excellent education for all children.
  Los padres deben de exigir que las escuelas se hagan responsables de proveer una educación excelente para todo niño.
- ✔ Public monies should be used to create excellent public schools in all parts of town and all neighborhoods, especially in economically disadvantaged and minority areas
  Los recursos públicos se deben de usar para crear excelentes escuelas públicas en toda la ciudad, especialmente en las áreas pobres y minoritarias.

Nurturing of Parents - continued from page 14
don't really have big crises in this group. We are not jealous of one another, it's the opposite, *al contrario, nos damos* [on the contrary we give each other] support."

Margarita James echoed her comments:

> Each person is important, and we know that we are important. We know that the next person, what they say, is just as important as what we say, and we all take that into consideration with one another. We do have a lot of bonding together. We support one another very much. I think that's what makes it work for us.

Martha Ortiz added:

> It is the very thing that has taken place here. It is okay for us to all have different thoughts because we are all unique, and yet we bond so that we contribute to everything, and that is what makes us a success.

We do not measure our efforts in parent leadership development with numbers. The long-term impact will be measured by the stamina of the participants and the degree to which they extend themselves through the recruitment and development of their peers. IDRA's policy and advocacy concerns might sometimes be broader and more extensive, yet we cannot move any faster in the community than the pace of development among these new leaders. What our research tells us is that parents do care about the education of their children. And, we have proof that given proper support, any parent can be a leader to create excellent schools for all children.

Aurelio Montemayor is the lead trainer in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at idra@idra.org.

IDRA Publication Available

Hispanic Families as Valued Partners: An Educator's Guide

by Maria Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., Aurora Gallagher, Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D., Nina Adame-Reyna, M.S. and Josie D. Supik, M.A.

This publication explores the role of Hispanic families, particularly parents, in U.S. education. Through a presentation of facts about Hispanics in the United States and an honest discussion of Hispanic cultural values and mores, the authors dispel the myths that many educators have about their Hispanic students' families. Most importantly, the book focuses on the common ground shared by schools and Hispanic homes – most notably that education is important. It seeks to show administrators and teachers the value of family participation in education. Instructions and worksheets for implementing a parental involvement program tailored to the needs of Hispanic families and a comprehensive resources list are also provided. (90 Pages; 1993; $19.95)

Available from IDRA at 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190; 210/684-8180; fax 210/684-5389; e-mail: idra@idra.org.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In March, IDRA worked with **6,651** teachers, administrators and parents through **124** training and technical assistance activities and **109** program sites in **14** states plus the United Kingdom. Topics included:

- *Project FLAIR (Focusing on Language and Academic Instructional Renewal)*
- Recognizing Cultural Differences in the Classroom
- CALLA Model Training
- Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation
- WOW Workshops on Workshops

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- Houston ISD, Texas
- Muskogee Public Schools, Oklahoma
- Louisiana State Department of Education
- Marfa ISD, Texas
- South San Antonio ISD, Texas
- Roswell Public Schools, New Mexico
- Mexican American Caucus of the Texas Legislature

Activity Snapshot

The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. Among its priorities is to support the organization and ongoing professional development of school support teams. For example, the STAR Center provided monthly on-site assistance to a school district that was planning its Title I Schoolwide Service-Learning project. Sessions were provided on collaborative inquiry, building a learning community, authentic instruction and portfolio assessment. Faculty at the elementary, middle and high schools are planning to infuse service-learning into the curriculum. The STAR Center is also helping the district coordinate federal and foundation funding. The STAR Center is a collaboration of IDRA, the Dana Center at UT Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula.

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/684-8180.

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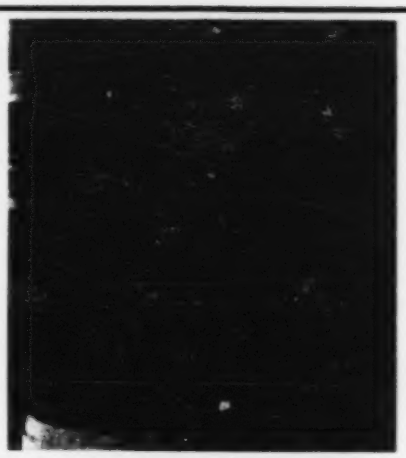
Texas School Finance Reform: An IDRA Perspective

by José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.



Dr. José A. Cárdenas (right) presents a copy of his book to Demetrio Rodriguez (left), lead litigant in the Rodriguez vs. San Antonio ISD case. Photo credit: Randall Reines Photography, San Antonio, 1997.

A master story-teller, Dr. José A. Cárdenas offers an insider's view of the 28-year history of school finance in Texas. Dr. Cárdenas is the founder and director emeritus of IDRA and is the only person who has been actively involved in the entire school finance reform effort since the early days of the *Rodriguez vs. San Antonio ISD* litigation when he was superintendent of the Edgewood Independent School District. More than a history, this book provides a blueprint for persons interested in bringing about future reform in schools and other social institutions. Beginning with a description of the Texas system in 1950, the account covers court cases, legislation, and advocacy efforts and concludes with the status and future of school finance reform. Personal vignettes sprinkled throughout offer glimpses of those special untold moments that impacted history. Much of this volume – including the myths of school finance and lessons learned – relate to reform efforts in other states as well. Dr. James A. Kelly, president of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, provides a foreword, "Fighting the Good Fight," describing Dr. Cárdenas as a trailblazer and pioneer. As a former program officer for the Ford Foundation, Dr. Kelly coordinated support for school finance reform efforts around the country.

> *"He worked hard, he played hard. And in doing so, never lost sight of his goal. Because for José school finance reform was never really an end in itself. It remained (and remains) a means to a larger end: to improve teaching and learning for all children; in particular, to improve the life chances of the poor and dispossessed ... This book is a testimony to a life lived in pursuit of that dream, one which paid off for all of Texas' children."*
>
> – Dr. James A. Kelly

Officially released on April 29, 1997 – the 10th anniversary of the Edgewood decision by State Superior Judge of Travis County Harley Clark that struck down Texas' school finance system as unconstitutional.

(ISBN 1-878550-63-2; 1997; 387 pages; hardback; $30)

Distributed exclusively by the Intercultural Development Research Association
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228; Phone 210 684-8180;
Fax 210 684-5389; e-mail: idra@idra.org. It is IDRA policy that all orders totalling less than $30 be pre-paid.

All Pianos Have Keys and Other Stories

by Dr. José A. Cárdenas

In a way, this small, 134-page book complements Dr. José Cárdenas' larger *Multicultural Education: A Generation of Advocacy*. The multicultural education book is an anthology of 92 professional articles resulting from his 45 years as a professional educator. *All Pianos Have Keys* represents the lighter side of these 45 years.

"The seriousness of my professional life has been paralleled by extensive humor in my personal life. I enjoy a funny story and a good joke," writes Cárdenas in the Preface.

The first eight articles deal with the lighter side of his life. They include personal anecdotes from childhood to adulthood. The second section consists of 12 anecdotes where humor and professional seriousness have intersected. The last section consists of nine articles on a variety of professional topics addressed in a lighter context than is possible in professional publications.

(ISBN 1-878550-53-5; 1994; 134 pages; paperback; $12.70)

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5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228; Phone 210 684-8180;
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My Spanish-Speaking Left Foot

by José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.

José A. Cárdenas (right) and his sister, María de Jesús (left), in Charro and China Poblana costumes. Circa 1938.

It was inevitable that José Angel Cárdenas would spend most of his professional life working in the development of multicultural and bilingual programs. He was born in Laredo, Texas, in 1930 with an extensive number of relatives on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. In his fourth book, Dr. Cárdenas combines laughter and insight as he re-lives his encounters growing up in a multicultural environment. He depicts the cultural influence of Mexico and the Spanish-speaking world on a Mexican American living in the United States.

> *"I remember sometimes saying that I was born with my right foot in the United States and my left foot in Mexico. I specifically designate my left foot as the Spanish-speaking one because I was taught in the U.S. Army that the left foot always comes first, and Spanish was my first language."* – *José A. Cárdenas*

In addition to illustrating his childhood capers and his travels throughout Central and South America, Dr. Cárdenas provides compelling reflections of multicultural topics such as wealth, class, language, religion, education and family. Dr. Cárdenas served more than 47 years as a professional educator and is the founder and director emeritus of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). IDRA is based in San Antonio and works with schools across the country and internationally to improve education for all children.

(ISBN 1-878550-59-4; 1997; 136 pages; paperback; $9.00)

Distributed exclusively by the Intercultural Development Research Association, 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228. Phone 210/684-8180, Fax 210/684-5389, e-mail: idra@idra.org. It is IDRA policy that all orders totalling less than $30 be pre-paid.

Multicultural Education: A Generation of Advocacy

by Dr. Jose A. Cardenas

This compilation includes 92 articles on multicultural education published over a 25-year period. Dr. Jose A. Cárdenas is the founder of IDRA, was its executive director for 20 years and now serves as director emeritus of the organization. The book provides a historical overview of the author's involvement in the most significant issues in multicultural education as a teacher, administrator and an active advocate for children. It is being distributed by Allyn & Bacon as a reference textbook on this subject.

The dates of the various articles included in the textbook range from 1970 to 1992, though some of the material dates back to the middle 1960s. Articles are organized into 10 chapters dealing with each of 10 major issues in multicultural education. Each chapter is accompanied by a bibliography and appropriate discussion questions. The book also contains five cumulative indices of authors, court cases, legislation, organizations and topics.

Multicultural Education is a reading imperative for teachers, administrators, teacher trainers and policy formulators interested in providing equal educational opportunity to all segments of the school population.

Topics Included:

- minority education
- bilingual education
- education of undocumented children
- school dropouts
- retentions in grade
- early childhood education
- science, math and technology
- standardized testing
- school reform
- a new educational paradigm

(ISBN 0-536-58760-4; 1995; 556 pages; hardback; $38.00)

Distributed by Allyn & Bacon and by the Intercultural Development Research Association, 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228. Phone 210/684-8180, Fax 210/684-5389, e-mail: idra@idra.org. It is IDRA policy that all orders totalling less than $30 be pre-paid.

Dr. José Angel Cárdenas Receives University of Texas Distinguished Alumni Award

Dr. José A. Cárdenas received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Ex-Students' Association of The University of Texas. Recipients of this prestigious award have distinguished themselves professionally and through service in their field of expertise. He and five other awardees were honored by the university at a gala event on the University of Texas campus on September 5, 1997.

Dr. Cárdenas is the founder and director emeritus of the Intercultural Development Research Association in San Antonio. He received a bachelor of arts degree as well as a doctorate of education from the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Cárdenas has served more than 47 years as a professional educator.

Dr. Cárdenas is a native of Laredo, Texas, and has worked in San Antonio for most of his professional career. Nationally recognized as an educational expert and civil rights advocate, Dr. Cárdenas is a pioneer in the fields of educational research and school finance equity. He is a former superintendent of the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio, and the district named an early childhood education center in his honor in 1972. He was instrumental in the *Edgewood* court cases regarding school finance reform and has greatly impacted educational legislation and instruction.

Dr. Cárdenas has served as a source of technical information to state and federal legislatures and administrations, as well as to foundations, policy organizations and community-based organizations around the country. His work as a policy-maker and educator has moved many people toward a better understanding of cultural diversity and how it is used to enhance or deny opportunities for culturally diverse students.

As a result of Dr. Cárdenas' leadership and vision, IDRA gained international recognition for its research capabilities and the training and technical assistance it offers in the areas of bilingual education, school finance equity, early childhood education, community and parent involvement, desegregation assistance and school reform.

In conjunction with the award presentation, IDRA is releasing Dr. Cárdenas' fourth book, *My Spanish-Speaking Left Foot*. This autobiographical account depicts the cultural influence of Mexico and the Spanish-speaking world on a Mexican American living in the United States. Dr. Cárdenas uses humor and insight to describe his experiences growing up in a multicultural environment. Earlier this year, on the 10th anniversary of the *Edgewood* decision by the Texas Supreme Court, Dr. Cárdenas' *Texas School Finance Reform: An IDRA Perspective* chronicling the 28-year history of school finance reform in Texas, was released. In the 1987 decision, Texas' school finance system was declared unconstitutional and the *Edgewood* case won its first battle.

School Improvement *- continued from page 7*

Austin. Joseph Vigil is an education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Both provide training and technical assistance to schools through the STAR Center. The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. It is a collaboration of IDRA, the Dana Center at U.T. Austin, and RMC Research Corporation. For information about STAR Center services, call 1-888-FYI-STAR. Comments and questions can sent via e-mail to Dorothy Knight at dlknight@mail.utexas.edu and to Joseph Vigil at idra@idra.org.

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Creating schools that work for all children,
through research • materials development • training • technical assistance • evaluation • information dissemination